

Notes on the third 2019 meeting of Convenors and Friends

5 June 2019

1. The third 2019 meeting between Convenors and Friends and the President of IFAD was held on Wednesday, 5 June in room C-600, at 11 a.m.

Item 1: Opening remarks by the President and adoption of the agenda

2. The President welcomed the Convenors to the meeting, including Friends from List A (Germany) and List B (Nigeria), and thanked them for their flexibility in accommodating the change of date for the meeting.
3. The President shared some updates from his recent travels to Tanzania and Mozambique.
 - Ñ In Tanzania, the Government expressed a continued interest in engaging with IFAD, especially in ways where borrowed funds are used for projects that boost productivity and sustainability of results.
 - Ñ In Mozambique, IFAD projects had been negatively impacted by Cyclone Idai. The need to integrate climate resilience in projects was noted. Regarding the Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF), it was important to pay due attention to the needs of the countries such as Mozambique and how to engage with them without necessarily adding to their debt burden.
4. The President indicated his upcoming travel for events aimed at promoting IFAD visibility and highlighting IFAD's critical leadership role and innovative contribution to the theme of global architecture of food security and agriculture.
5. The Convenors adopted the agenda for the meeting without amendments.
6. Prior to considering the agenda items, Management provided responses to the questions raised by Convenors at an informal meeting with the Secretariat on 31 May, regarding the establishment of a Rural Youth Advisory Council (RYAC), and the West and Central Africa (WCA) portfolio.
7. The Director of the Environment, Climate Change, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG), noted that the Division was already taking some preliminary actions in the process of establishing the RYAC. This was an aspect included in the Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) approved by the Executive Board at its 125th session. A concept note was being prepared and Management would at some point share an update with the Board.
8. Responding to whether the RYAC had Terms of Reference and what its official status would be, Management informed Convenors that a review of existing councils in other

IFIs and UN agencies was ongoing, and based on this analysis, a suitable model for IFAD would be adopted. One member proposed considering a multi-stakeholder approach such as the one for the Committee for Food Security, and urged IFAD to ensure that the Advisory Council remains inclusive with active participation of all individuals.

9. Regarding the WCA portfolio and why there were no projects for submission to the 127th Board session for Central Africa, Management clarified that at the 128th Board session in December, the Central Hub would represent about 40 per cent of the volume of approvals, with projects for Cameroon and DRC.

Item 2: 127th session of the Board

10. The President indicated that he would be holding consultative meetings with each List and sub-List prior to the September Board as done in May and looked forward to making this a regular feature. He also noted that there would be a Rural Development Report event in Mali at the beginning of July, and that the new USA Ambassador has expressed interest in participating in the event.
11. The List A Convenor reiterated the List's support for the COSOP/CSPEs consultations prior to the formal session as it accorded members ample time to discuss pertinent issues and to interact with the regional directors. She also commended the President's pre-Board meetings with the different Lists.
12. Regarding the list of possible items for inclusion in the Provisional Agenda for EB127, members raised the following:
 - Ñ Given that there would be several new Board members after the summer, List A recalled the importance of making documentation available to the Board sufficiently in advance of the session, and of organizing induction sessions for the new Board members.
 - Ñ The List C1 Convenor urged Management to avoid presenting a large volume of projects at certain Board sessions. Management reminded members that most of the project and programme proposals could not be presented in May, given that the DSF issue with respect to IFAD11 had to be resolved first.
 - Ñ Regarding the large volume of projects and programme proposals, the President suggested and Convenors endorsed the idea of holding consultations on projects similar to those planned for the COSOPs. This would contribute to freeing up more time during the Board session given that members would have

provided their comments to the project proposals at the consultation. The projects would then be presented to the Board for approval.

Ñ List A further requested to consider the possibility of discussing some financial or more strategic issues earlier during a Board session, and to reflect this in the schedule of work for the Board.

13. Responding to a question about the readiness of the Capital Adequacy Framework for the Board, Management noted that this aspect would be discussed at an informal seminar in July, in the context of the IFAD's overall Financial Architecture.
14. To accommodate the anticipated heavy agenda, the President proposed to hold the Board session over three days rather than the planned two. He also reminded Convenors that Management will present introductory statements only when strictly necessary.

Agenda item 3: Follow-up of the Fifth Executive Board Retreat

a) Feedback and lessons learned

15. A draft retreat report as well as a list of follow-up actions had been shared with Convenors for their comments. A final report would be posted for the September Board session for information. Convenors reiterated the following comments:
 - Ñ Convenors noted that the retreat agenda had been quite heavy but also necessary and useful. They expressed the view that there were several issues and a tight timeline, and urged Management to decide what the priorities were, especially if IFAD were to proceed with the credit rating exercise.
 - Ñ The Sub-List C1 Convenor expressed appreciation for the IFAD 2.0 document, noting that it pulled together various different aspects and thus provided members with clarity of the integrated strategic vision of IFAD. He also recalled the governance matters arising from the retreat, and the need to further discuss ways to deal with the issues of limited time, skills, and capacities of members. With regard to the governance, the List A Co-Convenor noted that options for a follow-on meeting on governance were being explored and a session is planned for September around the time of EB127.
 - Ñ List A Convenor reiterated the need to take into account that the majority of the Board members required ample time to consult with technical counterparts in Capitals, in order to engage meaningfully in the more technical issues, especially

those dealing with the financial architecture. This would continue to pose constraints for the finalisation of the various issues on the timeline.

Ñ The long-term DSF also remained an issue of concern that needed to be agreed upon by the Board. In this regard, Management noted that two scenarios were being explored and would be presented to the Board for consideration.

16. Overall, members requested that a timeline of issues to be discussed in 2019 and 2020 be shared with them. Given that a number of topics required feedback from capitals and that some members of the Board would be new to IFAD, such a timeline would help in planning ahead and obtaining timely feedback as required.

17. Regarding the implementation modalities of the Impact Fund, and the role of the steering committee vis-à-vis the role of the Executive Board, the President noted that these aspects were yet to be firmed up.

18. Responding to a query on how in-kind contributions from the Private Sector would be handled, the President indicated that such contributions would go directly to the beneficiaries and would not need to be channelled through IFAD.

b) Report and matrix of actions

19. The matrix of follow-up issues arising from the retreat would be presented to the Board for approval in December. The President, thanking all Convenors and the Board for the feedback provided especially on the five main issues —DSF, IFAD mission, Leverage, Impact Fund, and Private Sector engagement—noted that a one-day follow-on retreat would be organised at IFAD premises. At the retreat, Management would provide the Board with updates on the agreed action points from the May retreat and the various studies conducted so far. A suitable day in October would be identified for the follow-on retreat and communicated to Convenors. Additional issues arising from the one-day follow-on retreat would be captured in the matrix to be presented in December for the Board's approval.

Agenda item 4: Update on the IFAD12 Consultation

20. The Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance, informed Convenors that the IFAD12 External Chair Selection Committee had held its first meeting. The Committee had reviewed the two nominations received, and would be sharing updates with members as necessary.

21. The President provided the rationale for the selection of the candidate nominated by Management.

Agenda item 5: Update on the Forty-third session of the Governing Council (GC43)

22. Convenors reviewed the information note on GC43 and provided their comments. Specifically, they noted that it could perhaps be useful to have a theme that reflected the IFAD 2.0 strategic direction in a catchy way, in order to draw attention to the IFAD12 Consultation.
23. Convenors were reminded that, while the feedback of the GC Bureau would be sought, setting the programme and agenda for the Governing Council was the responsibility of the President. Convenors' feedback would be solicited prior to finalising the programme and agenda of GC43. It was also noted that the Board would be required to approve the Draft GC43 Provisional Agenda in September.

Agenda item 5: Other Business

a) Corporate Induction Seminar

24. Convenors welcomed the corporate induction seminar announced by the Secretary of IFAD, which was scheduled on Friday, 7 June, and aimed to engage with IFAD members at all levels, including those Member States that did not interact regularly with IFAD.